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AUTHOR Simms, Richard L.
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ABSTRACT

A new professional licensure system for teachers developed by the Minnesota Board of Teaching in conjunction with the Educational Testing Service is described. Initial work with the Rand Corporation in 1987 provided a plan for a new licensure system. The state's expectations for a performance assessment system to measure the skills of first-year teachers reflect a major conclusion of recent teaching research, that the appropriate application of skills depends on the context and the varying pedagogical demands associated with subject matter, instructional objectives, stages of student development, and previous learning. In addition to requiring that all applicants for teacher licensure complete a professional preparation program from an accredited teacher preparation institution and an examination of skills in reading, writing, and mathematics, the Board of Teaching proposes the following reforms to the licensure system: (1) an examination of teaching knowledge at the end of collegiate teacher preparation; (2) a 1-year supervised teaching internship in a professional development school; and (3) licensure-specific examinations of teaching skills on completion of the internship. The internship is an integral part of the proposed new system. A table displays the licensure levels and experience of the 45 experienced and 74 first-year teachers who participated in the design and piloting of the performance assessment system. (SLD)

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PRAXIS III: A COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The Minnesota Board of Teaching and Educational Testing Service

Paper Presented at: 1992 ECS Assessment Conference

June 5, 1992

MINNESOTA BOARD OF TEACHING

Richard L. Simms, Teacher Education Specialist

608 CAPITOL SQUARE BUILDING
550 CEDAR STREET
ST. PAUL, MN 55101

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A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT TO DEVELOP A PERFORMANCE BASED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM FOR ASSESSING THE SKILLS OF BEGINNING TEACHERS

The Minnesota Board of Teaching and Educational Testing Service

INTRODUCTION

To maintain the highest standards of teacher preparation, teacher education in the 1990s must develop teachers who have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions reflective of the complexity and heterogeneity of the society in which we live. The Minnesota Board of Teaching is meeting this challenge through the design of a new conception of a professional licensure system for teachers.

LEGISLATIVE CHARGE: ASSESSING THE SKILLS OF BEGINNING TEACHERS

In 1986, the Minnesota Legislature charged the Board of Teaching to develop a plan to evaluate, before a continuing license is issued, the teaching skills of beginning teachers. The Board of Teaching contracted the RAND Corporation to conduct a study which would provide Minnesota with a plan for a new licensure design. Following a 1987 RAND Corporation report, Licensing Teachers: Design for a Teaching Profession, which was presented to the legislature's education committees, the legislature reaffirmed its commitment to the need to assess the skills of beginning teachers, and authorized the Board of Teaching to establish an assessment system of teacher performance:

> **[M.S. §125.185, Section 11, Subd.4.]** The Board shall design and implement an assessment system which requires candidates for initial licensure and first continuing license to demonstrate the abilities necessary to perform selected, representative teaching tasks at appropriate levels.

From 1987-90 the Board continued its work to develop a system to assess the skills of beginning teachers. The Board of Teaching elected to work in collaboration with Educational Testing Service to develop and pilot a performance assessment system to assess selected skills of first-year teachers. The collaborative relationship between the Board of Teaching and ETS was based on the premise that the development of such a performance-based assessment would require 1) the type of educational research and assessment expertise that ETS could supply, and 2) the extensive

participation of practicing teachers and teacher educators which Minnesota could offer. For Minnesota, the research project moves the state closer to developing a reliable and valid licensing system, including a performance assessment component for beginning teachers.

THE COLLABORATION AND ITS GOALS: MBOT/ETS

With help of a national cadre of experts in the field of performance assessments, ETS developed a knowledge base and draft instruments for use in a performance based assessment system for beginning teachers. Minnesota decided to collaborate in the further development of the instrumentation and training dimensions, refining them for state use by:

- analyzing them based on the state's prevailing educational philosophy, goals and regulations
- revising the instruments as necessary
- developing materials for the training of evaluators in the use of the instruments
- refining the instruments and training through field testing in classrooms

The Minnesota Board of Teaching

Among its charges the Board of Teaching establishes **standards for teacher preparation institutions and develops and creates the criteria for licensure of public school teachers.** The Board of Teaching has established an increasingly effective collaborative style that is positively received and endorsed in the state. The eleven member board, appointed by the governor, consists of six classroom teachers, one higher education faculty member, one school administrator, and three members of the public. Since the inception of the Minnesota Board of Teaching in 1973, the Board has reflected a decision to provide teachers increased responsibility for the control of their profession.

The Board regularly provides forums for open and structured dialogues, sharing initiatives on developing and implementation of ideas and programs, the assimilation and dissemination of information, etc, focused on teacher development. Four major initiatives over the past seven years which are congruent with the collaborative work with ETS provide the basis for Minnesota's collaboration:

1985-86 Board of Teaching/Higher Education Coordination Board - TASK FORCE:

Study and recommend changes in teacher education to meet contemporary and anticipated teaching conditions, program outcomes, outcome measures for evaluation and approval of the programs to assure graduates are capable of being effective teachers, and other measures to meet education needs.

1986-87 Minnesota's Vision for Teacher Education: Stronger Standards, New Partnerships

Task Force report on recommended program outcomes for future teacher education and evaluation of teacher education program effectiveness.

1987-89 New Rules for Curriculum Redesign and Program Evaluation

Adopt rules for the redesign of teacher education programs to implement a research based, results-oriented curriculum that focuses on the skills teachers need in order to be effective. Adopt rules for teacher education program evaluation to assure program effectiveness based on proficiency of graduates in demonstration attainment of program outcomes.

1989 - Develop and pilot research based, results oriented structured model for an assessment system

Design and implement an assessment system which requires candidates for initial licensure and first continuing licensure to demonstrate the abilities (skills, knowledge, dispositions) to perform selected, representative teaching tasks at appropriate levels.

BACKGROUND - EARLY WORK WITH RAND CORPORATION

The initial report: Licensing Teachers: Design for a Teaching Profession (1987) provided a plan for a new licensure system, intended to ensure that entrants to teaching have both the opportunity to master basic teaching skills and a fair and reliable vehicle for demonstrating this mastery.

The 1987 report recommended that in addition to requiring that all applicants for teacher licensure complete a professional preparation program from an accredited teacher preparation institution that the Board require the following changes:

- an examination of teaching knowledge at the conclusion of the collegiate teacher preparation program,
- a one-year supervised teaching internship in a professional development school, and
- licensure-specific examinations of teaching skill upon completion of the internship

PURPOSES OF AN ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Each day teachers must apply knowledge of subject matter, child development, group dynamics, methods of teaching, and classroom management to extremely complex situations. The

quality of education children receive is largely dependent on how well their teachers have been prepared to perform these challenging tasks.

The best way to encourage excellent teaching and to inspire public confidence that only qualified individuals might practice as teachers is to ensure that all prospective teachers undergo a rigorous program of training and screening before they are permitted to operate as autonomous professionals. Such a training and assessment program has both internal (professional) and external (social) purposes: **to increase the quality of preparation that beginning teachers undergo, and to justify the public's perceptions of teachers as qualified experts with special knowledge, skills, and dispositions.**

MINNESOTA HAS DEVELOPED A STRUCTURE FOR AN ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

- Minnesota's existing statements of teacher education goals and standards are the conceptual basis for the needed assessment system (NEW TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM EVALUATION RULES - ADOPTED 1990)
- New assessment tools should complement and not override or conflict with existing sources of quality control. Decisions about whether new assessments for particular purposes are warranted and what form they should take must be based on what tools are most appropriate for particular goals.
- An assessment system includes, but is not limited to, testing just prior to licensing; other sources of information derived from the teacher education program and the internship. The structuring task is to decide what should be evaluated, when it should be evaluated, and in what manner it should be evaluated.

Minnesota's expectations for a performance assessment system for the skills of first-year teachers reflects a major conclusion of teaching research of recent decades: The appropriate application of skills depends on context, that is, on varying pedagogical demands associated with, among other things, subject matter, instructional objectives, stages of student development, and previous learning.

The Board believes that a major purpose of examinations of teaching knowledge and licensure-specific teaching skill is to determine objectively whether the prospective teacher has an adequate understanding of professional knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge to practical tasks. The internship is as necessary to licensure as are examinations of teaching knowledge and

skills. The requirements for completion of an internship as well as passing examinations balance the demands for reliability, validity and job relevance, and provide the assurance that neither alone could provide. This licensure system meets three basic objectives that an assessment system for professional preparation and licensure must fulfill:

(1) It should articulate the knowledge and skills all professionals are expected to master as a minimum requirement for safe practice. The assessment system thus represents a professional consensus about what kinds of abilities and commitments provide the foundations for professional standards of practice.

(2) It should be constructed so as to encourage the acquisition of the required professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions. That is, the assessment system should be designed and staged in such a way that it actually increases the probabilities that prospective teachers will acquire the desired capabilities.

(3) It should reliably and validly sort those candidates who are adequately prepared for safe, unsupervised practice from those who are not.

A second Minnesota study conducted by the RAND Corporation: The Teaching Internship: Practical Preparation for a Licensed Profession, (1990) outlined and addressed five essential aspects of the internship program:

- Standards for the educational program for interns
- Standards for the intern
- Standards for administrative structure for the internship
- Standards for faculty and staffing
- Standards for facilities and resources

A NEW LICENSURE SYSTEM

States are responsible for setting and enforcing licensing standards to protect students, parents, and the public. The current licensure system is based on state approval of licensure programs. As a result of this system, the curriculum of no other profession is regulated by states in the way that teacher preparation is regulated.

The process of setting standards must be separated from the process of enforcing standards, and can be accomplished through a combination of the deregulation of teacher education curriculum and the assessment of candidates for licensure. In such a system, accreditation will focus on the capability of institutions to offer teacher preparation (e.g. policies, governance, resources, staffing,

admission standards, programs based on research and sound professional practice), rather than on individual preparation programs offered by institutions.

However, graduating from an accredited teacher preparation institution cannot be the only measure for issuance of a license valid for independent practice, since it does not necessarily assure that individuals who complete a teacher preparation program possess minimum competence. There are differences among institutions in their teacher education programs and in their admission standards and grading practices. Therefore, in addition to requiring that all applicants for teacher licensure complete a professional preparation program from an accredited teacher preparation institution and an examination of skills in reading, writing, and mathematics, the Board of Teaching is proposing that the licensing system be reformed by requiring the following changes:

- an examination of teaching knowledge at the conclusion of the collegiate teacher preparation program,
- a one-year supervised teaching internship in a professional development school, and
- licensure-specific examinations of teaching skill upon completion of the internship.

The internship is an integral part of the licensing system. It is designed to assist interns in mastering the skills and knowledge that beginning teachers will be expected to demonstrate prior to being licensed to practice independently,

The internship provides an appropriate setting for developing, observing, and verifying the critical aspects of professional practice.

The RAND study in Minnesota, <u>Licensing Teachers: Design for a Teaching Profession,</u> calls for the reconceptualizing of teacher preparation and the inclusion of a structured internship year that requires an intern (first-year licensed teacher) to successfully complete an assessment system (including a performance assessment of an intern's skills, knowledge, and dispositions). As stated in the RAND study:

> *The standards guiding teacher education programs which were developed by the 1985 Task Force on Teacher Education for Minnesota's Future, provide the same indicators for standards that a licensing system might seek to assess and suggests how training opportunities could be structured.*

DEVELOPING A PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Staff of the Board of Teaching began dialogue with Educational Testing Service in 1990, a year prior to actually beginning the field testing and research project. These early meetings in 1990, provided opportunities for extensive dialogue on the proposed content, structure, and procedures which would facilitate the development of a valid, reliable performance assessment system for first-year teachers.

WORK TIMELINE

SPRING '91	SUPPORT & COOPERATION FROM STAKEHOLDERS
SUMMER '91	NOMINATIONS FOR INITIAL CADRE
FALL '91	CADRE 1 - ASSESSORS & FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS TRAINING / PILOTING / RESEARCH CYCLE
WINTER '92	CADRE 2 - ASSESSORS & FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS TRAINING / PILOTING / RESEARCH CYCLE
SPRING '92	CADRE 1 & 2 - PILOTING/RESEARCH CYCLE
FALL ' 92	PROJECT CLOSURE/CADRE DIALOGUES : Implications for redesign & What's next for Minnesota

TEACHER PARTICIPATION AND SELECTION:

A customary, an documented practice of the Board, is to engage stakeholders early on initiatives which set policy of the licensure system. In May 1991, the Board of Teaching invited approximately 40 individuals from around the state to an orientation focused on beginning collaborative work with ETS. Invited were representatives from:

MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES FOR TEACHER EDUCATION
MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
MINNESOTA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
MINNESOTA FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
BEMIDJI PUBLIC SCHOOLS - HUMAN RESOURCES
MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS - HUMAN RESOURCES
ST. PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS - HUMAN RESOURCES

This group and all of the participating teachers were provided with a background of the Minnesota Board of Teaching proposal to redesign the teacher licensure system. The orientation included a description of the requirement for candidates for Minnesota teacher licensure to complete a structured internship year and an assessment system which includes a performance assessment system of teaching skills of first-year teachers. This group of stakeholders will be convened in the fall 1992, for a

debriefing of the research activity which involved more than 110 Minnesota experienced and first-year teachers in the designing, piloting, and refining of a performance assessment system for first-year teachers. Participating teachers represented urban, suburban, and rural schools, beginning and experienced teachers, elementary and secondary levels of instruction, and different subject areas. This selection process and diversity of representation composing the participants exemplifies the process employed by the Minnesota Board of Teaching to engage key stakeholders, and characterizes the type of support from the Minnesota Education Association (MEA) and the Minnesota Federation of Teachers (MFT).

COMPOSITION OF PRACTICING TEACHER RESEARCHERS

As Minnesota proceeds with efforts to implement a new licensing system which includes: 1) the completion of a highly structured well defined internship, and 2) an assessment system for newly licensed teachers, the foundation of the existing Minnesota standards are important for directing and evaluating teacher preparation, teacher practice, and teacher renewal. Minnesota Teachers who participated in Cadre 1 and 2 of Assessor's Training (45 experienced teachers), have shared in the dialogue and will assist the Board in further examination of procedural options and configurations for training in professional development schools where first-year internships will occur:

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING

- What types of training might be configured for the first-year teacher and clinical faculty (possibly mentors) (time/length)

IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM

- Compatibility of existing preparation criteria/standards with assessment criteria

IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTEXT

- Instruction and experiences, facilities and resources, professional development, diversity, etc.

CLASSROOM TEACHERS PARTICIPATING IN THE DESIGN AND PILOTING OF A FIRST-YEAR PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM		
LICENSURE LEVEL	**EXPERIENCED TEACHERS**	**FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS**
ELEMENTARY	17	45
J.H.S/MIDDLE S.	7	12
SECONDARY	21	17
TOTALS	**45**	**74**

TEACHING AREAS: ***(Participating Classroom Teachers)***

Experienced	First-Year
Elementary	**Elementary**
Special Education	**Special Education**
English	**Science**
Social Studies	**Physical Education/**
American Indian Studies	**Aviation**
Physics	**Economics**
Chemistry	**Art**
Spanish	**Industrial Arts**
Life Science	**Social Studies**
Mathematics	**Business Education**
Art	**Biology**
Music	**Drivers Education**

Having established the standards for teacher education and continuing with work to implement the research design for a beginning teacher internship and assessment system of skills that beginning teachers must possess, Minnesota's vision for teacher education has been partially achieved. While the standards for a results-oriented, research based teacher education curriculum required in the redesigning of teacher education are today operational, the Board of Teaching remains committed to establishing a professional licensure system for Minnesota Teachers. This is an extension of today's

vision for teacher education.

BOARD EXPECTATIONS FOR AN ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

- **COHERENCE OF THE CURRICULUM**
- **DEPTH AND BREADTH OF CONTENT COVERED**
- **RANGE OF TEACHING TECHNIQUES USED**
- **QUALITY AND VARIETY OF MATERIALS EMPLOYED**
- **TYPES AND FREQUENCY OF STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS**
- **QUALITY OF INSTRUMENTS USED FOR STUDENT ASSESSMENT**
- **KINDS OF FEEDBACK STUDENTS RECEIVE ON THEIR WORK**

The Board continues to believe that context is a major concern in the design and implementation of a performance assessment system. How well a teacher performs on the job is a function not only on his or her knowledge, skills, and dispositions but also on the teaching environment.

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